

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

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TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 4517

INFO AMEMBASSY BONN

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY MADRID

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

AMCONSUL OPORTO

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMCONSUL PONTA DELGADA

AMEMBASSY ROME

AMEMBASSY STOCKHOLM

USMISSION NATO

DIA WASHDC

USCINCEUR VAIHINGEN GER

C O N F I D E N T I A L LISBON 5892

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, PO

SUBJ: PRESIDENT AND PRIME MINISTER STRESS NEED FOR DISCIPLINE

REF: (A) FBIS LONDON 052127Z OCT 75, LD 052127Y

(B) FBIS LONDON 050407Z OCT 75, LD 050407Y

SUMMARY: IN STATEMENTS OVER WEEKEND, BOTH PRESIDENT COSTA GOMES AND PRIME MINISTER AZEVEDO HAVE STRESSED NEED FOR RETURN OF DISCIPLINE, ORDER, AND HIERARCHY. BUT WORDS AND GOOD INTENTIONS WILL NOT SUFFICE. DEMONSTRATIONS TONIGHT (OCT 6) IN SUPPORT OF RADICAL MILITARY UNITS IN OPORTO AND LISBON WILL PLACE ADDITIONAL
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STRAINS ON ARMED FORCES DISCIPLINE. END SUMMARY

1. COSTA GOMES SPEECH: IN OCT. 5 SPEECHES TO NATION AND ARMED FORCES ON HIS RETURN FROM POLAND AND USSR, PRESIDENT COSTA GOMES MADE UNEQUIVOCAL CALL FOR RETURN TO DISCIPLINE AND AUTHORITY. COSTA GOMES CITED POLISH AND SOVIET ACCOMPLISHMENTS, PARTICULARLY POST-WAR RECONSTRUCTION, TO UNDER SCORE NEED FOR DISCIPLINE, ORDER, AND HIERARCHY TO ACHIEVE REVOLUTIONARY GOALS IN A SOCIALIST PORTUGAL. NATION RADIO HAS HIGHLIGHTED PRESIDENT'S ADDRESS TO ARMED FORCES ON NEED FOR AUTHORITY.

2. PINHEIRO DE AZEVEDO INTERVIEW: IN OCTOBER 4 "EXPRESSO" INTERVIEW, PRIME MINISTER PINHEIRO DE AZEVEDO COMMENTED ON CURRENT POLITICAL-MILITARY SITUATION. HIGHLIGHTS FOLLOW:
-- FIRST PRIORITY: HIGHEST PRIORITY OF NEW GOVERNMENT MUST BE REESTABLISHMENT OF DISCIPLINE, ORDER, AND AUTHORITY. UNTIL THIS HAS BEEN ACCOMPLISHED, NO PROGRESS CAN BE MADE IN CORRECTING THE ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL CONDITIONS WHICH ARE HOLDING BACK THE REVOLUTION.

-- POLITICAL-MILITARY SITUATION: FAR LEFT AND SOME ELEMENTS OF LEFT, INCLUDING MORE MILITANT MEMBERS OF THE COMMUNIST PARTY, INCORRECTLY BELIEVE THAT VI PROVISIONAL GOVERNMENT INTENDS TO USE REPRESSIVE MEANS AGAINST THEM. THESE GROUPS HAVE MANAGED TO SEDUCE LARGE NUMBERS OF SOLDIERS STATIONED IN URBAN AREAS WITH PROMISE OF BETTER LIVING AND WORKING CONDITIONS, THEREBY CAUSING A BREAKDOWN IN MILITARY DISCIPLINE. THIS DEVELOPMENT HAS RAISED THE POSSIBILITY OF A CONFRONTATION BETWEEN MILITARY UNITS.

-- COUP ATTEMPT: OCTOBER 1/2 ALLEGED FAR-LEFT COUP ATTEMPT WAS A COMPLEX PHENOMENON WHICH IS STILL BEING INVESTIGATED. A MANEUVER TO PROVOKE A CONFRONTATION BETWEEN MILITARY UNITS, HOWEVER, DID TAKE PLACE. (SEE PARA 5 BELOW.)

-- CONSTITUENT ASSEMBLY: WHEN CONSTITUENT ASSEMBLY'S SECOND AND FINAL 90-DAY TERM EXPIRES DECEMBER 5, AZEVEDO WILL PROPOSE TO REVOLUTIONARY COUNCIL THAT ASSEMBLY BE CONVERTED IMMEDIATELY INTO A LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY WITHOUT HOLDING NEW ELECTIONS.

-- COSTA GOMES AND OTELO: HAD PRESIDENT BEEN IN PORTUGAL, EVENTS OF SEPTEMBER 29 THROUGH OCTOBER 4 MIGHT HAVE DEVELOPED DIFFERENTLY. COSTA GOMES WEIGHS AND ANALYZES ALL POSSIBLE ALTERNATIVES BEFORE MAKING A DECISION, BUT IN SOME CIRCUMSTANCES A QUICK RESPONSE IS MORE IMPORTANT THAN LENGTHY ANALYSIS. BUT IN THIS INSTANCE, CONFIDENTIAL

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OPTIONS SELECTED WOULD PROBABLY HAVE BEEN THE SAME. COPCON HEAD OTELO CARVALHO IS "IMPORTANT PERSONALITY" WHO HAS BEEN EXPLOITED POLITICALLY. AZEVEDO ASKED REVOLUTIONARY COUNCIL TO CREATE MILITARY INTERVENTION GROUP (AMI) TO ASSURE THAT HIS DECISIONS COULD NOT BE NEGATED BY OTELO'S.

3. DEMONSTRATIONS: TWO DEMONSTRATIONS SCHEDULED FOR TONIGHT (OCT 6) WILL PLACE FURTHER STRAINS ON ARMED FORCES DISCIPLINE.

-- "PROGRESSIVE POPULAR ORGANIZATIONS" WILL GATHER TO SHOW THEIR SUPPORT FOR THE FAR-LEFT LISBON LIGHT ARTILLERY REGIMENT (RALIS).

-- IN OPORTO, A DEMONSTRATION HAS BEEN CALLED IN SUPPORT OF PERSONNEL OF DISBANDED OPORTO DRIVING CENTER DETACHMENT (CICAP). A SIMILAR DEMONSTRATION DRAWING 400-500, INCLUDING SOME FROM CICAP, WAS BROKEN UP LAST NIGHT (OCT 5) BY EIGHT COMMANDOS.

4. FAR LEFT COUP ATTEMPT: HIGH-LEVEL SOURCE IN PRIME MINISTER'S OFFICE TOLD DCM OCT 5 THAT OCT. 1/2 SOCIALIST PARTY (PS) ALERT WAS RESPONSE TO REAL NOT IMAGINED THREAT OF COUP BY FAR LEFT AND COMMUNISTS. SOURCE SAID "GOVERNMENT HAD BEEN HANGING BY THREAD" AND THAT PS MOBILIZATION WAS RESPONSE TO SPECIFIC REQUEST FOR HELP FROM MILITARY MINISTERS OF GOVERNMENT.

5. COPCON "EXPLAINS" INCIDENT: THE CONTINENTAL OPERATIONAL COMMAND (COPCON) ISSUED A COMMUNIQUE OCTOBER 5 "CLARIFYING" A WEEKEND INCIDENT IN LISBON SUBURB OF BEIROLAS (REF B). COMMUNIQUE SPECIFICALLY DENIED OCTOBER 4 "EXPRESSO" REPORT REGARDING CONFRONTATION BETWEEN A COPCON OFFICER AND RALIS DEPUTY COMMANDER MAJOR DENIS DE ALMEIDA WHEN LATTER PREVENTED ARMS FROM BEING WITHDRAWN FROM BEIROLAS ARMORY. COPCON COMMUNIQUE CONFIRMED THAT ARMS WERE TO BE WITHDRAWN ACCORDING TO PLAN FOR STORING WEAPONS IN MILITARY UNITS THROUGHOUT THE COUNTRY FOR POSSIBLE DISTRIBUTION TO LOCAL POPULACE. COMMUNIQUE STATED THAT WITHDRAWAL OF ARMS HAD BEEN HALTED BY ORDER OF BEIROLAS COMMANDER PENDING CLARIFICATION AND THAT THIS ORDER WAS SUBSEQUENTLY RATIFIED BY COPCON COMMANDER GENERAL OTELO SARAIVA DE CARVALHO. NET RESULT OF COPCON COMMUNIQUE WAS: (A) TO CONFIRM ESSENTIALS OF "EXPRESSO" STORY; AND (B) TO PROVIDE ANOTHER EXAMPLE OF MILITARY DISSENSION.

6. COMMENT: COSTA GOMES' REMARKS PROVIDED A TIMELY VOTE OF CONFIDENTIAL

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CONFIDENCE TO PRIME MINISTERIAZEVEDO'S UPHILL EFFORTS TO RESTORE DISCIPLINE WITHIN THE ARMED FORCES. NOBODY IN LISBON HAS TO READ FAR BETWEEN THE LINES TO DISCOVER THAT COSTA GOMES' WORDS ABOUT DISCIPLINE AND AUTHORITY IN RUSSIA AND POLAND ARE DIRECTED SPECIFICALLY TO THE POLITICAL-MILITARY SITUATION IN PORTUGAL. TONIGHT'S DEMONSTRATIONS IN LISBON AND OPORTO WILL PLACE ADDITIONAL STRAINS ON SHAKY ARMED FORCES DISCIPLINE AND WILL BE A FURTHER CHALLENGE TO AZEVEDO AND HIS GOVERNMENT.

7. THE BEIROLAS EPISODE IS DISTURBING ON SEVERAL COUNTS. FIRST, OFFICIAL CONFIRMATION THAT A PLAN EXISTS FOR POSSIBLE DISTRIBUTION OF WEAPONS TO CIVILIANS IS OMINOUS. GENERAL OTELO'S ACTIVE INVOLVEMENT IN THE PLAN AND HIS WILLINGNESS TO BOW TO FAR LEFT DENIS DE ALMEIDA ARE FURTHER EXAMPLES OF THE PROBLEMS AZEVEDO

HAS TO CONTEND WITH CONCERNING HIS STILL INFLUENTIAL COPCON HEAD.

8. YET, FACT THAT PRIME MINISTER, WITH PRESIDENT'S BACKING, IS
CONTINUING TO PURSUE HIS CONFRONTATION OVER ISSUES OF DISCIPLINE
IS ENCOURAGING. THE OUTCOME IS STILL UNCERTAIN, BUT AZEVEDO'S
WILLINGNESS TO TAKE THE INITIATIVE AT LEAST GIVES THE ANTI-
COMMUNISTS A FIGHTING CHANCE.
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